Hellenistic Hesiod

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Abstract

This chapter uses Callimachus' *Aetia*, Aratus' *Phaenomena* and Nicander's *Theriaca* to explore the intense engagement with Hesiodic poetry in the Hellenistic period. Informed by statistics for explicit references to Hesiod at this time, it asks: why is this the only period of antiquity in which the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* are considered equally important? Questions of genre and didaxis, of inspiration and knowledge, are set against a backdrop of learned library culture, in order to determine what it really meant in the Hellenistic age to be a scholar-poet. This chapter draws on a recent wave of interest in the ancient reception of Hesiod, and considers not only how Hesiodic poetry was used, but also how the potential for that use is embedded in the archaic poems themselves.

Keywords

Hesiod, Callimachus, Aratus, Nicander, genre, didaxis, Muses, inspiration, library, reception.

Introduction

Callimachus as the 'New Hesiod' (Fantuzzi/Hunter 2004). Aratus as the 'Hellenistic Hesiod' (Fakas 2001). Apollonius, Theocritus, Nicander; all have been shown to owe some kind of debt to the archaic Greek poet. In this chapter I will survey a broad range of interactions with Hesiodic poetry in the Hellenistic period.

Many of the issues explored in the 2011 Brill *Companion to Callimachus* in relation to Hesiod, such as the role of the Muses, didactic language, polyphony and poetic voices, are relevant beyond the Callimachean corpus, and it is this reach of the Hesiodic legacy which this chapter seeks to convey. The editors of that Companion note that 'we do not include chapters on Callimachus' relationship to individual Greek precursors like Homer or Hesiod or Pindar' (Stephens 2011:15), and yet in her chapter 'Callimachus on kings and kingship', for example, Silvia Barbantani cannot avoid the admission that 'Hesiod is Callimachus' most important Greek model in constructing an image of the just king from whom wealth, prosperity and peace flow' (Barbantani 2011:178). In Brill's 2009 *Companion to Hesiod*, Evina Sistakou dedicates a chapter to 'Callimachus Hesiodicus Revisited', updating Reinsch-Werner's 1976 study 'Callimachus Hesiodicus' in light of modern theoretical approaches and with the aim of re-evaluating common misconceptions. Sistakou's focus on one Hellenistic poet is indicative of the wealth of material to be discussed, and of the fact that a full-scale treatment of the reception of Hesiod in the Hellenistic period is necessarily beyond the scope of a single chapter. Yet leaving questions of breadth aside, Sistakou's chapter needs in its turn to be revisited, and updated in light of a recent wave of interest in the ancient reception of Hesiod.

Koning in his 2010 book *Hesiod: the Other Poet* considers Hesiodic reception in literary sources over one millennium (from the seventh century BC to 300 AD), consulting works of some 200 ancient writers as well as epigraphic material and papyri, and collating around 1200 references. The primary concern of this book is how Homer defines the way in which Hesiod is received: 'Homer's omnipresence was strongly felt, however, and in the hellenistic age the only way to oppose it was by reviving the traditional image of Hesiod as a counter-force to Homer' (Koning

2010:295). Boys-Stones and Haubold's 2010 *Plato and Hesiod* and Ziogas' 2013 *Ovid and Hesiod* each focus on a particular author and his interaction with the Hesiodic corpus (the latter is specifically concerned with the *Theogony* and the *Catalogue of Women*). Van Noorden's 2015 *Playing Hesiod* takes Hesiod's Myth of the Races, told at *Works and Days* 106-201, as a starting point, and traces later engagements with and appropriations of this myth. Hunter's 2014 *Hesiodic Voices* provides a number of case studies of ancient reception of the *Works and Days*, in an attempt 'to build a more general picture of how the Hesiod of the *Works and Days* acted as a creative stimulus throughout the literature of antiquity' (Hunter 2014:32).

Sistakou begins her Companion chapter with a discussion of 'The three faces of Hesiodic poetry, the theogonic, the didactic and the genealogical' (Sistakou 2009:219), and notes that 'it would be a misconception to speak of the "Hesiodic voice" as a unified, homogeneous whole; one should rather consider the diverse voices as emerging from the different styles dominating each poem of the Hesiodic corpus, mainly the autobiographical/authoritative of the *Theogony* and the moralizing/gnomic of the *Works and Days*' (Sistakou 2009:222). Van Noorden picks up on this idea when she establishes some principles for her analysis – 'The first is the formation of different "Hesiods" from selected elements of his poetry' (Van Noorden 2015:10) – and Hunter's title *Hesiodic Voices*, with its use of the plural, makes the point clearly. In my own 2015 book *Hesiod's* Works and Days*: How to Teach Self-Sufficiency*, I discuss the 'Hesiod stamp': a strong guiding hand to the diverse material in the Hesiodic corpus, which influences the way the poetry is experienced and read, and as such sows the seeds of its own reception. It is from this polyphonic yet coherent poetic persona that the current chapter will take its structure, drawing out the variegated voices which constitute the multifaceted appeal of the poems that

comprise the Hesiodic corpus. This chapter, then, is a study of the Hellenistic reception of Hesiod: but it begins from the invitations for that reception embedded in Hesiodic poetry itself.

At the beginning of his book, Koning presents quantitative information about the reception of Hesiod's poetry over time. The following table is of particular interest (Koning 2010:21, Table 1):

	Archaic	Classical	Hellenistic	2nd Sophistic
Works and Days	37 (8%)	97 (18%)	48 (9%)	344 (65%)
Theogony	5 (2%)	26 (11%)	49 (21%)	158 (66%)

In this table, the first figures give the number of references to each poem in each period (within Koning's parameters of citation), and the percentages give the distribution through time of references to the *Works and Days* and *Theogony* respectively. We can observe from these figures that something unique happens during the Hellenistic period: the *Works and Days* is referred to less frequently, whilst the *Theogony* is mentioned more often. The result is that this is the only period in which both Hesiodic poems are referenced with more or less equal frequency (Koning 2010:22). The key question I will be asking in this chapter is: why might this be the case? To phrase it in one way, what is it about the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* that made them equally appealing at this time; and considered from another angle, what is it about the Hellenistic period that balances out the reception of these two poems?[1] The reception of Hesiodic poetry in other eras is explored in other chapters in this Handbook [?], but I hope to show that something special happens to Hellenistic Hesiod.

The Hellenistic Hesiodic Experience

Koning's table charts explicit references to Hesiod and the Hesiodic poems, and for this reason, though a useful starting point, it shows us just the tip of the iceberg. In the Hellenistic period in particular, the allusive nature of the poetry in vogue meant that references would more often than not be implicit: a nuanced alignment with Hesiodic poetics; a scholarly appropriation of Hesiodic diction; an insertion of new poetry into a tradition shaped by that of Hesiod. This subtle and sophisticated response to poetic predecessors was due in large part to the ways in which Hesiod was experienced in the Hellenistic period. By the fourth century BC, Hesiod's poetry featured in the school curriculum,[2] and may have been used as training for the *progymnasmata* (Canevaro 2015:18). Egyptian papyri of the Hellenistic and Roman periods confirm Hesiod's canonical status in education at that time, and in particular extant school texts verify the presence of the *Catalogue of Women* in the classroom (Cribiore 2001:141, 197; on education in the Hellenistic period see Wissmann 2010). Hesiod's presence in schools, then, is one element of continuity in the reception of his poetry. However, the Hellenistic period saw one major development: the library (for an overview of the impact of the library on Hellenistic poets see Harder 2013). This propelled Hesiodic poetry from study by the student to study by the scholar, making it not just part of rhetorical education but a constant reference point for the scholar-poet. Rather than relying on memory, education and experience, poets immersed in the Alexandrian library such as Callimachus and Apollonius could return again and again to texts, engaging with them at the level of minute detail. This had implications both for the treatment,

analysis and critique of earlier poetry, and for the production and, again, critique of new poems.

A common element of stylistic critique in the Hellenistic period was an assessment of a poem's χαρακτήρ: the way it is written, the stylistic category into which it falls, the stamp of its author. To offer just one example (for others see Hunter 2014:298-9), a report of Apollonius' defence of Hesiodic authorship of the *Shield of Heracles* (Hesiod T 52 Most) gives as one of the reasons the poem's χαρακτήρ. The argument goes that, since it is Hesiod-like, it must be by Hesiod. This kind of assessment is on the one hand built on minutiae like word choice, theme and myth, gnomic formulations – but on the other hand it encompasses all of these minutiae simultaneously, and so much more. The Hesiod stamp (Canevaro 2015), a χαρακτήρ generated by the corpus itself, had by the Hellenistic period been internalised through easy familiarity with Hesiod's poetic oeuvre, and could in turn be used as a critical tool of other poetry.

Most notable in Koning's table is that the number of explicit references to the *Works and Days* falls during the Hellenistic period. Whereas the *Theogony* sees a steady increase in references over time, the *Works and Days* experiences a marked Hellenistic dip in both finite and percentual terms. One reason for this may be the prevalence of *new* didactic poetry at this time. The genre, or 'mode', of the *Works and Days* has been much discussed (see Heath 1985, Fowler 2003, Canevaro 2014, Sider 2014). Particularly relevant here is the argument that the genre of didactic poetry was essentially created in the Hellenistic period, and retrojected back onto earlier texts (Sider 2014; see also Koning 2010:343). The Hellenistic period is therefore important in the history of the reception of the Hesiodic corpus and the *Works and Days* in particular, as it is the time in which genres began to be clearly defined (though the

didactic genre remains nebulous to this day, as we can see from the various attempts to delineate criteria for it: see e.g. Effe 1977, Toohey 1996, Volk 2002) and poets began consciously to operate within their parameters, producing new material. The new wave of didactic poetry in the Hellenistic period is often attributed to Aratus, the first poet to show the kind of awareness of a genre that can be specifically defined (Effe 2005:30-1).[3]

In operating within this genre, however we define it, Hellenistic poets were creating an affiliation with the poet of the *Works and Days*. This can be seen not only in general generic terms but also at the level of detail: allusions of the sort which would not register in Koning's analysis of explicit references, such as the use of kennings. This particular mode of expression, common in the *Works and Days* and probably originating in folkloric or popular language, found its way into the writings of Callimachus and Aratus, but most notably that of Nicander who uses it in deliberate imitation of Hesiod (Overduin 2015:79). Yet as well as looking back to the Hesiodic model, Hellenistic didaxis also branched out in terms of the material on which the poets were drawing. Take, for instance, the work of Nicander (for an overview see Magnelli 2010). The *Alexipharmaca* covers poisons and their antidotes, and the *Theriaca* teaches about venomous creatures. This is a technical, pharmacological poetic corpus, and it has been argued that Nicander drew on several prose treatises for his information, most of all the toxicological work of Apollodorus of Alexandria.[4] It has been argued, too, that it is probable Nicander also wrote prose (Overduin 2015:5), just like Callimachus whose prose works seem even to have outweighed his poetic output. Another example of new didactic enterprises is that of Aratus and his *Phaenomena*, a didactic poem much of which (at least according to Aratus' second century BC commentator Hipparchus) may have been derived from

Eudoxus' prose treaty on stars and star signs.[5] As Harder 2013:106 summarises, 'the availability of so much material in the library may to a certain extent account for the increasing popularity of the genre of didactic poetry in the Hellenistic period, because poets *could* now find a great deal of accumulated knowledge in prose texts which they could "transfer" to poetry.' Yet the examples of Nicander and Callimachus show that there was not always a divide between those producing poetry and those producing prose. We can say that this was not only a case of poetic appropriation of others' knowledge – rather, these Hellenistic poets were true scholars, generating, sharing, accumulating and transmitting knowledge through a cohesive body of work including catalogues (such as Callimachus' monumental *Pinakes*), prose treatises *and* poetry. We can also say that this Alexandrian moment of intense didaxis did not operate in splendid isolation: it was a culmination of the preceding centuries of prose as a way of recording knowledge. Historiography, philosophical dialogue, scholarly treatises: all came together in the Hellenistic libraries, and spurred their recipients on to a new phase of poetic production in a Hesiodic vein, yet informed by their prose predecessors. The fact that the preceding centuries *had* seen such a proliferation of scientific writings in prose, however, highlights the striking achievements of Hellenistic didactic poets. They *chose* to revert to an archaic mode of knowledge transmission, showing themselves to be not only scholars, but scholar-*poets*.

Something else had changed drastically since the time of Hesiod: writing. Wherever we place Hesiod chronologically and at whatever point on an oral to literate continuum (for discussion see in this Handbook [?]), what we can say is that the Hesiodic corpus, like the Homeric, is rooted in a tradition of oral composition and dissemination. Hellenistic poetry, on the other hand, is not only written, but it prizes, reflects on and plays with its written status. Hellenistic poets were, as we have seen,

avid readers; but they were also committed writers. With the archaic wisdom tradition is integrated, then, not only knowledge gleaned from other writings, but new features possible exclusively in the written medium. Such features include visual techniques like acrostics (see Gale forthcoming), which both Aratus in his *Phaenomena* and Nicander in his *Theriaca* incorporate.[6] Hesiod's penchant for riddling and for hiding meaning (on which see Canevaro 2015:166-79; one prominent example is the fable of the hawk and the nightingale at *Works and Days* 202-12) is perpetuated in new ways in this period of markedly *literary* innovation.

A Chorus of Hesiodic Voices

Hesiod's *Theogony* starts from the beginning (115 ἐξ ἀρχῆς), from the very first things (116 πρῶτιστα). It tells of how the gods came to be, how the Olympian pantheon was established and the spheres of influence of each of the gods within it. The poem thus has a strong aetiological impetus – something which becomes key in the Hellenistic period. Selden begins his 1998 article 'Alibis' with the statement: 'Callimachus of Cyrene wrote for a society of displaced persons', and indeed this reality goes a long way towards explaining the prevalence of *aetia* in Hellenistic poetry. Callimachus himself composed his *Aetia* in an estimated six thousand lines comprising four books. Callimachus' *Aetia* constitutes a kind of sequel to the *Theogony* as it provides a complete human history to match Hesiod's divine history and it takes the story to the next stage by narrating the *aetia* of the interactions (cults, rites) between men and gods (Hunter 2004:54-5, Sistakou 2009:226). In many ways, then, the *Aetia* looks beyond the *Theogony* to the Hesiodic corpus as a whole. The *Catalogue of Women*, too, provides the next chapter in the story begun in the

Theogony, and the *Works and Days* can also be thought of as a human history, taking us as it does up to the present Age of Iron (176 νῦν γὰρ δὴ γένος ἐστὶ σιδήρεον).

Within the didactic genre, Hesiod's *Works and Days* has a strong catalogic element, and the *Theogony* and *Catalogue of Women* take this even further. Indeed, the catalogue came to be considered a Hesiodic form to the extent that Aristarchus called the embedded catalogues in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* 'unhomeric' because they showed a Ἡσιόδειος χαρακτήρ (see Pfeiffer 1968:220). There was a proliferation of this type of poetry in the proto-Hellenistic age, with some even encroaching on Hesiodic themes such as the *Catalogue of Women* by one Nicaenetus (sadly nothing of this poem survives but its title). Of Hellenistic didactic poetry we can say that 'When stripped of its dramatic framing the *Theriaca*, like the *Alexipharmaca* and Aratus' *Phaenomena*, can be characterised as a catalogue' (Overduin 2015:29). Callimachus summarises the charge against him:

]ι μοι Τελχῖνες ἐπιτρύζουσιν ἀοιδῇ,
νήιδες οἳ Μούσης οὐκ ἐγένοντο φίλοι,
εἵνεκεν οὐχ ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκὲς ἢ βασιλ[η
…]ας ἐν πολλαῖς ἤνυσα χιλιάσιν
ἢ…]ους ἥρωας, ἔπος δ᾽ἐπὶ τυτθὸν ἑλ[ίσσω
παῖς ἅτε, τῶν δ᾽ἐτέων ἡ δεκὰς οὐκ ὀλίγη.

…the Telchines mutter against my song,
ignorants who are not friends of the Muse,
because I did not accomplish one continuous poem
in many thousands of lines on kings
or heroes, but like a child I turn out a short tale,

though the decades of my years are not few.

Aetia 1.1-6

Callimachus did not complete one continuous song in many thousands of lines on the glory of kings and heroes. The emphasis, however, is necessarily on the first part of the statement: that focused on structure and length. Callimachus cannot be claiming that he will not tell of kings and heroes, since the *Aetia* include stories of both; what he is suggesting, rather, is that he will narrate stories about kings and heroes but from an alternative perspective (Sistakou 2009:241). In this respect, then, the *Aetia* takes its cue from Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*: a poem which tells of the heroes resulting from amorous encounters between gods and mortal women. Its catalogic structure and its focus on the particular theme of women takes it far from repeating the structure of Homeric epic, and shows the poet adopting an alternative perspective to treat heroic subject matter. Callimachus picks up on these catalogic elements, and transfers them to an Alexandrian milieu by taking care not to thunder and to keep his Muse slender.

Sistakou 2009:227 observes that one feature tying Callimachus' *Aetia* to Hesiod's *Theogony* is 'the positive outlook on the notion of progress as a development from a chaotic past towards a civilised present', and she suggests that this 'should be perhaps contrasted with the *Works and Days*, when it expresses e.g. a pessimistic view on the decline of mankind in the myth of the five ages.' However, the Myth of the Races in the *Works and Days* is importantly *not* a story of steady decline, as the Race of Heroes provides the calm before the Iron-Age storm, and through Hesiod's didaxis even the Race of Iron are offered ways of turning their dire situation around. The civilised present to which Callimachus' *Aetia* directs us can be found in the glimmers of hope Hesiod presents in the *Works and Days* too, a

potentiality most fully worked out in the vignette of the Just City (*WD* 225-37). Sistakou also notes that 'Callimachus, in his catalogue-structured *Aetia*, proceeds from one story to another rather randomly'. Such randomness is a charge that has frequently been leveled at the *Works and Days* (though studies such as Hamilton 1989, Clay 2003 and 2009, and Canevaro 2015 provide counter-arguments), and the catalogic element inevitably recalls the *Catalogue of Women*.[7] Callimachus' *Aetia*, then, combines multiple Hesiodic voices in its structure and ordering, its content and tone.

In Book 3 of the *Aetia*, Callimachus offers no fewer than three explanations for why women having difficulty in childbirth call upon the virgin goddess Artemis.[8] This has, first of all, a *Works and Days* parallel in the Prometheus and Pandora myth and Myth of the Races as two competing (or complementary) *aetia* for work (Hunter 2004:58) – or, more appropriate to the comparison, labour. Callimachus, like Hesiod, uses multiple *aetia* to display his comprehensive knowledge – and to present a challenge to the reader, who has to choose between and put together different strands of myth and explanation. Further, the Prometheus and Pandora myth is an *aetion* which straddles the Hesiodic corpus, with the account in the *Theogony* differing in detail and focus from that in the *Works and Days* (Fraser 2011). Callimachus' multiple *aetia*, then, recall not only the complexity of the *Works and Days*' structure but also the aetiological dialogue between *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. Just as Callimachus' *Aetia* cannot be compared strictly with the *Theogony*, so can it not be limited to the *Works and Days*: it incorporates elements from both, as well as from the *Catalogue of Women*, and puts this all together in a Hellenistic framework for 'a society of displaced persons'.

A similar example is the relationship Callimachus establishes with the Muses in his *Aetia*. Rather than beginning by invoking the Muses and asking them for knowledge of genealogies in the divine realm, Callimachus *tells* the Muses that he knows of at least three genealogies of the Graces. The genealogical armature of the *Theogony* is thus combined with the poetic independence marked out by Hesiod in the proem to his *Works and Days*, when he asks the Muses to sing of Zeus but proclaims that he himself will tell 'true things' (*WD* 10 ἐτήτυμα) to Perses. Whereas in the *Theogony* (and in Homeric epic) the poet and the Muses sing in unison (Graziosi/Haubold 2010:1-8), the *Works and Days* seems polyphonic: the Muses are invited to sing a song tangential to Hesiod's own (Clay 2003:72-8, Haubold 2010:21, Canevaro 2015:100-2). In parading his knowledge in front of the Muses, then, Callimachus is combining different Hesiodic voices – or, more accurately, different stages in the development of the Hesiodic voice as he grows from ignorant shepherd to self-sufficient didactic poet – *and* he is incorporating a model which is itself polyphonic.

Immersed in contemporary library culture, the Hellenistic poets could draw on a wealth of accumulated knowledge, a range of collected sources, and thus 'The aetiological impulse here grows not from ignorance, but from knowledge' (Hunter 2004:58). Hesiod's poetry therefore begins in this period to be treated more holistically, with the multifaceted Hesiodic stamp triumphing over individuated Hesiodic voices. This is another possible explanation for the statistics which show a more balanced reception of the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* in the Hellenistic age. Callimachus' *Aetia* is a case in point: its aetiological thrust is not simply modeled on or a sequel to the *Theogony*, its most obvious comparandum, but a chorus of Hesiodic

voices drawn from across a varied yet essentially coherent poetic corpus and epic cosmos (on the epic cosmos see especially Clay 2003).

Hesiodic Inspirations

> Ἡσιόδου τό τ᾽ἄεισμα καὶ ὁ τρόπος· οὐ τὸν ἀοιδῶν
> ἔσχατον, ἀλλ᾽ὀκνέω μὴ τὸ μελιχρότατον
> τῶν ἐπέων ὁ Σολεὺς ἀπεμάξατο· χάιρετε λεπταί
> ῥήσιες, Ἀρήτου σύμβολον ἀγρυπνίης.
>
> The matter and manner are those of Hesiod: not the ultimate of songs,
> but it may be that the man of Soli has caught the sweetest
> of the verses. Hail slender sayings, symbol of Aratus' sleepless nights.
>
> Callimachus Epigram 27

This is Callimachus' review of Aratus' poetry, which aligns it with Hesiod's work in terms of subject and style. Although the poem is not named, we assume it to refer to the *Phaenomena* as λεπταί in the third line is thought to be an acknowledgement of the λεπτή acrostic of *Phaenomena* 783-7. It is a difficult epigram to translate and interpret, and it seems to evade consensus (Stewart 2008). In my translation I bring out a potential contrast between Homeric (the ultimate) and Hesiodic (the sweetest) poetry (as Hunter 2014:292-4). Koning 2010 has shown much of Hesiod's reception to be inextricably linked with that of Homer, and this antithesis fits with his analysis. For another interpretation, namely that these lines indicate that Aratus did not follow Hesiod in everything, see for example Volk 2010:199.[9] Whatever is the stylistic relationship to its predecessors, it is clear that Aratus' poetry meets the contemporary

Alexandrian aesthetic of 'slender' verses, just as Callimachus in his *Aetia* claims to have been told by Apollo to keep the Muses slender (1.24 τὴν Μοῦσαν δ᾽ὠγαθὲ λεπταλέην).

Aratus is presented as a hard-working poet, one who has spent many a sleepless night honing his craft (and condensing his verses). This in itself has its roots in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, a poem which both advocates hard work on the part of its audience and gives the impression of a teacher practicing what he preaches. For instance, though at *Works and Days* 597-8 Hesiod sets up a didactic hierarchy in which the poet instructs the farmer who must in turn instruct his workers, at 459 the hierarchy is blurred when the farmer is advised to pitch in (ὁμῶς δμῶές τε καὶ αὐτός). And the practical and intellectual self-sufficiency Hesiod advocates throughout the *Works and Days* (Canevaro 2015) is put into practice on a poetological level in terms of Hesiod's own independent didactic persona in the poem. Hesiod's concern for hard work (amongst other characteristics) makes him in the Hellenistic period a symbol of the learned and labouring poets of a new, markedly un-Homeric, kind (Koning 2010:3780). These scholar-poets do not attribute their achievements solely to inspiration, but also to their own hard graft.

Callimachus fuses Hesiodic hard work with Hesiodic inspiration, thus fusing the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*. In his *Aetia* he reworks Hesiod's inspiration told in the *Theogony* as a dream experience: importantly, he does not reject the Hesiodic model, but appropriates it and adapts it to his own purpose, employing new techniques to shape his own story.[10] He replaces what is presented in the *Theogony* as a real-world encounter with a dream sequence, putting his own twist on the event and notably one which is simultaneously more indirect and more credible. As Fantuzzi 2004:1 writes, 'Hellenistic poets turned to their advantage the distinction between

inspiration by the poetic divinities, on the one hand, and the primacy of "craft", *technē*, on the other; the two now formed a powerful unit, no longer a pair of opposed possibilities.' What must be noted, however, is that the bridge between the *Theogony* Muse-inspired voice and the blended voice of Hellenistic 'technical' poetics is that of Hesiod in his *Works and Days*. In differentiating his voice from that of the Muses yet keeping them on side to help with difficult topics such as seafaring (Canevaro 2015:130), Hesiod was edging towards this model by combining inspiration with experience, divine guidance with intellectual independence.

Nicander moves even further away from the Hesiodic model in his *Theriaca*, dispensing with an appeal to the Muses altogether.

> ἀλλ᾽ἤτοι κακοεργὰ φαλάγγια, σὺν καὶ ἀνιγρούς
> ἑρπηστὰς ἔχιάς τε καὶ ἄχθεα μυρία γαίης
> Τιτήνων ἐνέπουσιν ἀφ᾽αἵματος, εἰ ἐτεόν περ
> Ἀσκραῖος μυχάτοιο Μελισσήεντος ἐπ᾽ὄχθαις
> Ἡσίοδος κατέλεξε παρ᾽ὕδασι Περμησσοῖο.
> τὸν δὲ χαλαζήεντα κόρη Τιτηνὶς ἀνῆκε
> σκορπίον, ἐκ κέντροιο τεθηγμένον, ἦμος ἐπέχρα
> Βοιωτῷ τεύχουσα κακὸν μόρον Ὠαρίωνι,
> ἀχράντων ὅτε χερσὶ θεῆς ἐδράξατο πέπλων·
> αὐτὰρ ὅγε στιβαροῖο κατὰ σφυρὸν ἤλασεν ἴχνευς
> σκορπίος ἀπροϊδὴς ὀλίγῳ ὑπὸ λᾶι λοχήσας·
> τοῦ δὲ τέρας περίσημον ὑπ᾽ἀστέρας ἀπλανὲς αὖτως
> οἷα κυνηλατέοντος ἀείδελον ἐστήρικται.
>
> They say that evil-working spiders, along with

grievous reptiles and vipers and countless burdens on the earth,
came from the blood of the Titans, if indeed
the Ascraean on the slopes of furthest Melisseis,
Hesiod, by the waters of the Permessos, narrated true.
The Titan maiden sent forth the chilling scorpion
with its sharpened sting, when in her anger
she planned an evil fate for Boeotian Orion,
because he grabbed the undefiled garments of the goddess with his hands.
But the scorpion, lurking unseen under a small stone,
struck him on the ankle of his strong foot.
His famous sign is fixed unmoving among the stars,
as of a hunter, impossible to look at.

Theriaca 8-20

The reference at lines 10-12 to Hesiod at the Permessos river recalls the archaic poet's encounter with the Muses, recounted at *Theogony* 22-34 (and the Muses are bathing in the waters of the Permessos at *Theogony* 5). This reference shows Nicander's awareness of the Hesiodic model – away from which he then makes a conscious shift. Interestingly, at times he actually replaces the Muses with Hesiod himself as a source of information. In this passage, Nicander gives us two mythological notes: first, that according to Hesiod all deadly beasts come from the blood of the Titans; second, that Orion was killed by a scorpion sent by Artemis as a punishment. The first reference situates Nicander within a dense Hesiodic tradition (Hunter 2014:26), even though there is a problem with it: it references something not in our texts of Hesiod, and already unknown to the scholiasts to Nicander. The second reference bears striking

similarities to Aratus' treatment of the same myth at *Phaenomena* 637-46 (Overduin 2015:47). Already in the proem, then, it is clear that Nicander is drawing on both Hesiod and Aratus as models. It is worth noting, too, that the story of Orion becomes an *aetion* for his constellation. Myth becomes *aetion*: a narrative direction that, as we have seen, is characteristically Hellenistic. A similar instance of the synthesis of models occurs at the beginning of the second part of the *Theriaca* (715-16):

> Ἔργα δέ τοι σίνταο περιφράζοιο φάλαγγος
> σήματά τ᾽ἐν βρυχμοῖσιν·
> Guard against the works of the grievous spider,
> and the signs of its bites.

Here Hesiodic ἔργα start the first line, and Aratean σήματα the second (Overduin 2015:51-2). The Muses take a back seat to Nicander's two didactic models, which become bed-fellows across a substantial temporal gap. With the creation of new didactic poetry in the Hellenistic period, allusions within the genre become layered as archaic and contemporary reference points intertwine.

The first word of the *Theriaca* is ῥεῖα, easily. The importance of the first word of a poem is well rehearsed in discussions of the *Iliad*'s μῆνιν and the *Odyssey*'s ἄνδρα, both thematic openings – the other traditional possibility being an appeal to a particular source of inspiration (e.g. *Works and Days* 1 Μοῦσαι, *Theogony* 1 Μουσάων, *Phaenomena* 1 ἐκ Διός). Nicander takes another route: yet one which is keyed into Hesiod's *Works and Days* (Fakas 2001:63n190, Overduin 2015:47-8). The opening word of the *Theriaca* picks up on the anaphora at lines 5-7 of the *Works and Days*, in which Zeus easily accomplishes opposites:

ῥέα μὲν γὰρ βριάει, ῥέα δὲ βριάοντα χαλέπτει,

ῥεῖα δ᾽ ἀρίζηλον μινύθει καὶ ἄδηλον ἀέξει,

ῥεῖα δέ τ᾽ ἰθύνει σκολιὸν καὶ ἀγήνορα κάρφει

For easily he strengthens, and easily oppresses the strong,

easily he diminishes the conspicuous and raises up the inconspicuous,

easily he straightens the crooked and withers the arrogant

Works and Days 5-7

We might take this point further and note that the theme of ease is something which persists throughout the *Works and Days*: at line 325, for example, the gods easily diminish the household of the profit-grabbing, shameless man, and at line 288 ῥηιδίως is indicative of the Iron-Age human condition as, whilst Zeus can change our fortunes easily, all we mortals can do easily is grab misery.[11] With this choice of opening word, then, Nicander presents himself not only as operating independently, but as doing so with ease. It is relevant, too, that his work and that of other Hellenistic didactic poets lacks the strong ethical dimension of Zeus' 'reversals' in the *Works and Days*. Hesiod is concerned with the difficulty of restoring a mortal moral balance, whereas Hellenistic poets are more interested in aesthetic display and delight. Nicander picks up on the *Works and Days* voice of didactic autonomy and authority, but pushes it even further (if in a different direction): he professes that he is having no Aratean sleepless nights. Indeed, Aratus provides a mid-point on this spectrum of ease. Though according to Callimachus he works hard at his poetry, what comes more easily is the meaning of the stars:

πάντα γὰρ οὔπω
ἐκ Διὸς ἄνθρωποι γινώσκομεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι πολλὰ
κέκρυπται, τῶν αἴ κε θέλῃ καὶ ἐσαυτίκα δώσει
Ζεύς· ὁ γὰρ οὖν γενεὴν ἀνδρῶν ἀναφανδὸν ὀφέλλει
πάντοθεν εἰδόμενος, πάντη δ᾽ ὅ γε σήματα φαίνων.

For not yet do men find out everything
from Zeus, but many things are still hidden –
things which Zeus will grant us presently, if he wishes.
For he openly helps the race of men, appearing from everywhere,
and everywhere revealing his signs.

Phaenomena 768-72

Hesiod in his *Theogony* concludes that it is not possible to deceive the mind of Zeus (613 ὣς οὐκ ἔστι Διὸς κλέψαι νόον οὐδὲ παρελθεῖν). In the *Works and Days* too he professes that the mind of Zeus is difficult for mortals to know (483-4), even though *he* can speak of it because the Muses have taught him a boundless song (661-2). Aratus picks up these cues, but depicts a more open situation in which not only the inspired poet can understand Zeus but anyone who learns how to read σήματα. A lot is still hidden, and we remain dependent on Zeus' good will, yet the situation seems to be more promising than that presented by Hesiod (Hunter 2004a:230). We still have to interpret Zeus' signs, and (Aratus advertises) we need a 'handbook' like the *Phaenomena* to do so, but with the right guidance we may stand a chance. Van Noorden 2015:170 sees a nuanced integration of Hesiodic didaxis: 'it may be seen that for Aratus, Hesiod's poetry has become itself part of the "mind of Zeus", a world of material to be interpreted and appropriated, written in the sky, and hence

susceptible to new meaning.' The σήματα of the stars stand in for the polysemy of didactic poetry, something integral to Hesiod's *Works and Days* with its myths, fables, riddles, kennings – all of which require interpretation.

However easily poetry has supposedly come to him, Nicander envisages an ideal audience who are alert, attentive and sharp, who know not only Hesiod but also Aratus, Callimachus, Theocritus, and Apollonius well enough to appreciate Nicander's allusions (Clauss/Cuypers 2010:5-6). Aratus, too, expects input from his reader. For instance, the story of the Maiden leaving the earth (one of the passages of dense dialogue with the *Works and Days*) 'can be read as an *aetion* of the need, not only for economic activity such as trade, but also for the individual observation that characterizes the present' (Van Noorden 2015:176). This may create a contemporary reference point, but as we have seen throughout this chapter that does not preclude an engagement with an archaic *aetion* of its own. In the *Works and Days* Hesiod too models an ideal audience, through the intellectual ideal of the πανάριστος, the very best kind of man, who thinks of everything for himself:

> οὗτος μὲν πανάριστος, ὃς αὐτῷ πάντα νοήσει
> [φρασσάμενος τά κ' ἔπειτα καὶ ἐς τέλος ἦσιν ἀμείνω]·
> ἐσθλὸς δ' αὖ κἀκεῖνος ὃς εὖ εἰπόντι πίθηται·
> ὃς δέ κε μήτ' αὐτῷ νοέῃ μήτ' ἄλλου ἀκούων
> ἐν θυμῷ βάλληται, ὃ δ' αὖτ' ἀχρήιος ἀνήρ.
>
> That man is altogether the best, he who thinks of everything himself,
> considering the things which are then better in the end.
> He too is good, who listens to one who speaks well.
> But he who does not think nor, listening to another,

considers in his heart, this man is useless.

Works and Days 293–7

This takes us back to the importance of the library to Hellenistic poetics. As Harder 2013:107 has argued, 'the poets seem to refer their readers back to the library. The *Aetia* and *Argonautica* are products of the library, but the relevance of the library does not stop there. Readers are invited to think about the different points of view in scholarly discussions or to complete the picture with other information, for which they in their turn must consult the library'. This ongoing analytical, evaluative and dialogic process picks up on a key aspect of Hesiod's didaxis, and propagates it in a very real setting of scholarly poetics.

Conclusion

To return to the questions with which I started: what is it about the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* that made them equally appealing at this time, and what is it about the Hellenistic period that balances out the reception of these two poems? First, I hope to have shown that the Hellenistic poets treated the Hesiodic corpus as polyphonic but coherent, and thus though allusions may favour one poem in a particular context the other poem was never far away. I took Callimachus' *Aetia* as a case study, but we might draw similar conclusions from the *Phaenomena*, for example Aratus' Maiden can be interpreted as combining different Hesiodic resonances in that in the Golden Age she evokes the Just King of Hesiod's *Theogony* (81-93) and in the Silver Age her warnings resemble those of Hesiod himself to the

Iron Race in the *Works and Days* (Hunter 2004a:241) – and her presentation in both is reminiscent of Hesiod's Muses (Van Noorden 2015:195).

The particular contexts in which we find affiliations with or responses to Hesiod in the Hellenistic period are often marked by genre, something which can be considered a relatively new departure in formal terms. This does not always make things more straightforward: as Rossi 1971 so neatly put it, in the Archaic period, generic laws were unwritten but respected; in the Classical period they were both written and respected; in the Hellenistic period they were written but not respected. Didactic poetry has throughout this chapter been a case in point, as one of the reasons for which the *Works and Days* becomes less explicitly referenced in the Hellenistic age (the key shift we can extrapolate from Koning's figures) is because new didactic poetry was being produced that alluded to the archaic poem in much more complex and nuanced ways. Such 'learned' poetry, sidelining the Muses in favour of *technē,* was a culmination of an accumulation of knowledge in the Hellenistic library culture – and a further step along the road from archaic poetry, through classical prose treatises, to a resurgence of didactic verse. In this age of information, the Hellenistic poets sought to open things up once again: 'Whereas systematic philosophy and the technical handbook seek to close down options, didactic poetry can offer multiple readings which draw on diverse traditions and emphasise the role of the reader, rather than that of the omniscient teacher' (Hunter 2004a:234-5). Hesiod's *Works and Days* champions an audience who work hard not only in the fields but also at the site of meaning, and Hellenistic didaxis reiterates this requirement. Further, it does so in a specifically and emphatically *literary* milieu. 'Aratus' poem not only encourages viewers to read and reread the sky but also prompts readers to view and re-view his poem, regrouping its elements to form new signs' (Van Noorden 2015:191). The

visual aspect, the idea of returning again and again to a 'stored' didactic poem without fluctuations, is something newly Hellenistic – yet the attention to detail, in terms of both contents and semantics, is familiarly Hesiodic.

As Hunter 2014:20 puts it, 'Homer and Hesiod are always as modern as one wants them to be'. The Hellenistic age, with its 'society of displaced persons', was a time of intense interest in *aetia*. The *Theogony*'s genealogical armature, the *Catalogue of Women*'s structure, the *Works and Days*' multiple origin myths: all could be mobilised in support of this preoccupation. Nicander repeatedly presents us with *protoi heuretai* (Overduin 2015:109-12) – and the label of *protos heuretes* of didactic poetry can convincingly (if not necessarily accurately) be applied to Hesiod himself. In the Hellenistic period, therefore, Hesiod becomes the *aetion* not only for the *Aetia* but for an entire genre of didactic poetry, sometimes reworked almost beyond recognition but always there as a constant reference point.

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[1] Koning’s table provides information for the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* only. In this chapter I will also consider the *Catalogue of Women*, treating it as part of the Hesiodic corpus: I am guided in this not by our modern scholarly views on the authorship of the poem, but by the ancient reception of the Hesiodic corpus which was thought to be broader than we now treat it. For more on the Hesiodic corpus see in this Handbook [?].

[2] Though Ford 2010:146-7 argues that it was only the *Works and Days*, not the *Theogony*, which was taught in schools. He gives as evidence the observation by Plato’s Protagoras (*Protagoras* 325e-326a) that letter-teachers ‘set before their students on their benches works of good poets and compel them to learn them by heart, in which there are many admonitions and detailed narratives, panegyrics, and eulogies of the good men of the past’.

[3] As Overduin 2015:26 notes, 'It is this literary awareness that separates him and Nicander from Empedocles and Parmenides, who clearly wrote in the epic tradition, but less evidently in a Hesiodic-didactic vein'.

[4] On Nicander's other sources see Overduin 2015:7n23. On the pharmacological didactic 'heirs' of Nicander, a small corpus of poetry written between the late Hellenistic and early Imperial age, see Overduin forthcoming.

[5] In the case of both Nicander and Aratus, the technical nature of the teachings might lure us into supposing first-hand knowledge of the subject matter (hypothesising that Nicander must have been a physician, for example). However, such conclusions would be simply extrapolations from intratextual evidence in these figures' poetry, as we have no external verification. Such autobiographical readings are rife also in Hesiodic scholarship – on their risks see e.g. Canevaro 2015:41-3.

[6] Nicander chooses to include an acrostic of his own name (*Theriaca* 345-53). Aratus includes a number of literary (ΛΕΠΤΗ) and contextual (ΠΑΣΑ, ΜΕΣΗ) acrostics. Overduin 2015:60-1 suggests that 'Nicander's "hidden" signature seems to play on Aratus' concealed name, viz. the self-reference contained in the word ἄρρητον (*Phaen*. 2).' We have in Nicander, then, an example of layered references in Hellenistic poetry, combining Hesiod's riddling approach to didactic with Aratus' visual codification.

[7] Sistakou 2009:238 'Callimachus (at least partly) conceived his *Aitia* not only as a "sequel to the *Theogony*" but also as a neoteric version of the Hesiodic *Catalogue*, in terms of arrangement, content and story-patterning.' See further Hunter 2005.

[8] We know this not from the surviving fragments of the poem itself, but from a summary: *Diegeseis* 1.27-36.

[9] See Volk's chapter also for a clear overview of the relationship between Aratus and Hesiodic poetry. As Volk 2010:200 notes, the clearest examples of Aratus in his *Phaenomena* engaging closely with sections of Hesiod's *Works and Days* are 'the proem with its hymn to Zeus (1-8), which harks back to the beginning of the *Works and Days* (1-10), and the myth of Dike (96-136), an amalgam of Hesiod's account of the races of men (*WD* 109-201) and his description of the "maiden Dike" as a guardian of justice (*WD* 220-62).' For detailed discussion see Van Noorden 2015:168-203.

[10] Hunter 2014:21: 'this reworking calls attention to the crucial relationship between the subject-matter of the *Aitia* and that of Hesiod's *Theogony*, as well perhaps as to that between the form of the *Aitia* and that of Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*, but it is also true that the *Aitia* goes very far beyond the subject-range of these invoked archaic models. The past, then, is appropriated and made appropriate to new forms, not rejected.' Fantuzzi 2004:7 suggests that the dream form creates a parallel also with the experience of another theogonic poet, Epimenides, who wrote about receiving the contents of his works from the gods in a didactic dream.

[11] See also *Works and Days* 43: in the time before Prometheus and his epoch-changing encounter with Zeus, a man would *easily* (ῥηιδίως) have been able to work enough in one day to last him through an idle year.